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ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Argentina, Austria, Belarus, Belgium*, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia*, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland*, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece*, India, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein*, Lithuania*, Luxembourg*, Madagascar, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway*, Peru*, Poland*, Portugal*, Republic of Korea, Romania*, Russian Federation, Togo*, South Africa: draft resolution, Sweden*, Switzerland*,

1997/... Advisory services, technical cooperation and the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 926 (X) of 14 December 1955, in which the Assembly established the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, and Economic and Social Council decision 1987/147 of 29 May 1987, pursuant to which the Secretary-General established the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, as well as Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/55 of 19 April 1996,

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* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/23), in which the World Conference on Human Rights called for an enhanced programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, as well as for a more efficient and transparent management of the programme,

Mindful that the High Commissioner for Human Rights, according to his mandate as established by the General Assembly in resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, is responsible, inter alia, for the provision of advisory services and technical cooperation at the request of States as well as for the coordination of human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/1997/86) on advisory services in the field of human rights, including the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights,

1. Declares that advisory services and technical cooperation aimed at the development of national capacities in the field of human rights constitute one of the most efficient and effective means of promoting and protecting all human rights and democracy, particularly since these activities are undertaken at the request of Governments;

2. Welcomes, therefore, the increasing number of requests for advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights as an expression of the growing commitment of States to promote and protect human rights, and encourages all States in need of assistance in the field of human rights to consider making use of advisory services and technical cooperation in order to achieve the full enjoyment of all human rights;

3. Encourages the High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop further the potential for the provision of advisory services and technical cooperation;

4. Stresses that, with a view to assisting States effectively and encouraging them to strengthen human rights, the rule of law and democracy, priority should be given to technical cooperation programmes designed to address the specific requirements of the requesting countries;

5. Reaffirms that the provision of advisory services and technical cooperation may be seen as a complement to the monitoring activities of the human rights programme from which no Government is exempt, and notes in this regard that, in order to produce lasting results, monitoring and preventive activities may need to be accompanied by promotional activities through advisory services and technical cooperation;

6. Welcomes progress made in the management of the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation, notably the efforts made to apply more efficient procedures and training of staff in the area of project identification, management and evaluation, as well as the progressive development of clear objectives, strategies and priorities for the effective management of the technical cooperation programme, and, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, encourages the Secretary-General to pursue these efforts further;

7. Also welcomes recent efforts to integrate economic, social and cultural rights as well as a gender perspective into the technical cooperation programme;

8. Reaffirms that advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights require close cooperation and coordination between United Nations bodies and specialized agencies active in this field so as to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective programmes and avoid unnecessary duplication, and requests the High Commissioner to explore yet further possibilities for cooperation with specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations;

9. Encourages in particular the cooperation between the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, with a view to integrating projects for strengthening human rights, the rule of law and democracy into the country programmes of the United Nations Development Programme and in order to execute joint projects;

10. Invites relevant United Nations treaty bodies, special rapporteurs and representatives, as well as working groups, to continue to include in their recommendations, whenever appropriate, proposals for specific projects to be realized under the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights;

11. Notes with concern that in the current biennium the budgetary resources for technical cooperation in the field of human rights have decreased by half as compared with the previous biennium, and requests the Secretary-General to allocate to the human rights programme, in the context of the budgetary planning for the biennium 1998-1999, more human and financial resources for the enlargement of the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights in order to meet the substantially increased demand;

12. Expresses its appreciation for the contributions made to the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights and welcomes in particular the increasing contributions made by developing countries, and invites more Governments and non-governmental organizations to consider contributing;

13. Requests the Secretary-General, in accordance with Part II, paragraph 16, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and in cooperation with the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund as advisory body, to continue to ensure more efficient management of the Voluntary Fund, strict and transparent project management rules, periodical evaluations of the programme and projects, and the dissemination of evaluation results, including programme implementation and financial accounting reports, as well as to arrange for the holding of information meetings open to all Member States and organizations directly involved in the advisory services and technical cooperation programme;

14. Requests the Board of Trustees to continue to exercise its full mandate as advisory body to promote and solicit contributions to the Voluntary Fund and to continue to assist the High Commissioner for Human Rights in monitoring, reviewing and improving constantly the implementation of technical cooperation projects, the conduct of comprehensive needs assessments and the monitoring of ongoing as well as the evaluation of completed projects, and invites the Chairman of the Board to address the Commission;

15. Emphasizes the need for the nomination of a new coordinator for the Voluntary Fund with substantial experience in development cooperation;

16. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the necessary administrative assistance for the Board, to arrange meetings of the Board and to ensure that its conclusions are reflected in the annual report to the Commission on Human Rights on technical cooperation in the field of human rights;

17. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit an analytical report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session on the progress and concrete achievements made as well as obstacles encountered in the implementation of the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights and on the operation and administration of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights.